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Welsh and Working Class (and British too): The case of Huw T. Edwards

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This paper explores the complexities of multiple identities within the United Kingdom through a brief biography of Huw T. Edwards (1892-1970), a North Wales trade union and Labour leader. Edwards' political life provides an excellent opportunity to consider the inter-related nature of Welsh, British and class identities in the mid-twentieth century. The discussion of national identity in the multi-national UK has come to form a crucial part of twentieth-century historiography because of political devolution to Scotland and Wales after 1999. Historians such as Richard Weight and Robert Colls and sociologists such as David McCrone have suggested that there was a fundamental instability in "British" identities and that these have followed a process of disintegration since at least the Second World War.[1] In particular, Weight has described Huw T. Edwards as "a man whose gradual loss of patience with Britain's political elite mirrored that of millions of ordinary people."[2] Much of the argument about the decline of Britishness has related to the inability of "British" political parties to represent adequately political demands for the expression of distinctive identities emerging in Wales (and Scotland). Hence, Edwards' decision to resign from the Labour Party after five decades of membership and join Plaid Cymru is narrated as an irrevocable episode in the unraveling of Britain. The result has been a one-dimensional view of the expression of Welsh and Scottish identities as acts of political nationalism that would inevitably lead towards separation and the decline of British politics. Edwards was a Welsh-speaking official in a region of the Transport and General Workers' Union that contained both English- and Welsh-speaking Welsh workers as well as many English members in the Dee Estuary. Such complexities necessitate the continuing development of "British"

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[1] Richard Weight, *Patriots: national identity in Britain, 1940-2000* (Basingstoke: Pan, 2003); Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); David McCrone, "Unmasking Britannia: The rise and fall of British national identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 3, 4 (1997): 579-96. I would like to acknowledge the important contribution made to this project by my research assistant, Martin Wright. Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the British Academy for awarding me a major research grant.

[2] Weight, *Patriots*, 127.

historiography that maintains the links between national and class identities across the United Kingdom.[3]

This paper is, therefore, a contribution to the historiography about the state of the Union in the twentieth century. Fundamentally, I argue that Britishness in Wales was not in a process of unraveling from the end of the Second World War but instead continued to be developed through the persistent renegotiation of the Union between Wales and Westminster. This renegotiation mainly took place *within* the major political parties – Labour and the Conservatives.[4] Both parties saw themselves as British, but they were often able to represent the distinctiveness of Welsh identities as well. The contribution of people like Edwards enabled the parties to act across internal borders, representing regional, national and cultural differences within the UK. The second historiographical theme of this paper relates to methodology, and I argue that biography is an essential form of research in the understanding of national identities and their complex interrelationship with other social identities, particularly as represented within politics.

These themes are discussed in reverse order, so that the final part of the paper returns us to Edwards and Wales. Biography has frequently played a part in nation-building, in Wales and elsewhere. Examples from the catalogues of the National Library of Wales include *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London: Honorable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1959), *Great Welshmen of Modern Days* by Thomas Hughes (Cardiff: Western Mail and Echo, 1931), and *Famous Welshmen: short biographies*, written for the Welsh Department of the Board of Education and University of Wales Press Board (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1947). The significance of such biographies relates to the construction of national stories by the editors and authors, but they have encouraged the sense that biography is hagiographic – displaying exemplary lives for national purposes. Such biographies have encouraged a distrust of the biographical method among many historians. There have also been numerous academic biographies of Welsh political figures. These explore to a greater or lesser extent the contribution of their subjects to the development of Welsh identities in the twentieth century, but far

[3] At the conference where this paper was first presented, Professor Geraint Jenkins argued for a less "British" centered historiography of Wales, "Welsh History," An audit of research in Welsh studies, Swansea University, 2006.

[4] There is very little written on the Conservatives in Wales. See Felix Aubel, "The Conservatives in Wales,1880-1935," in *The Conservatives and British Society 1880-1990,* eds. Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 96-110, and the reflective piece by David Melding, "Have we been anti-Welsh? The Conservative Party and the Welsh nation," July 2005, http://www.conservatives.com/wales/publications.cfm, accessed 2 February 2007.

fewer historians have contributed to the discussion of the value of biography for an understanding of the development of plural national identities in Wales.[5]

Biography has major methodological benefits for the study of national identities. First, it allows for detailed discussion of human agency in the development of national identities.[6] Without getting caught up in discussion over Anderson's idea of the nation as "imagined community," it is fair to say that nations have to be imagined by individuals. Nation entails personal identity as well as collective identity. Biography allows exploration of the building of national identity from below and in conjunction with the other identities that make up each individual. Yet often historians and other students of national identity consider the collective imagination to the exclusion of the individual. Studies of national identity frequently take the form of considering the function of nations and nationalism, for example in the development of modern industrial economies, the mobilization of citizens in service of the state, or the rise to power of national bourgeoisies.[7] Much of the historiography of national identities in the 1980s and 1990s took this approach, focusing its energies on unpicking the "invention of tradition" and the construction of "the nation" by various elites.[8] There was extensive and very useful study of numerous cultural representations of the nation.[9] However, the conceptual implication of much of this work was that nation was something that *happened to* most people rather than an imaginative process in which they engaged in building the nation through their own efforts. Yet once historians and sociologists began to find nation everywhere, the realization came that national identity was "reproduced in myriad imperceptible ways, grounded in everydayness and mundane experience." [10] Michael Billig has described this as "banal nationalism" or "the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced … Daily, the nation is indicated or 'flagged' in the

[5] This gap has recently been addressed by the day conference on "The Individual in History/Writing Historical Biography," organized by the Centre for the History of Wales and the Borderlands at the University of Swansea, held in December 2006.

[6] See for example Andrew Thompson, "Nations, national identities and human agency: putting people back into nations," *The Sociological Review* 49, no. 1 (2001): 18-32.

[7] Some examples include Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, second edition, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), first published 1983 ; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth and reality*, second edition (Cambridge: Canto, 1992), first published 1990; and Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: crisis and neo-nationalism*, second edition (London: New Left Books, 1981).

[8] Most importantly, E.J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), first published 1983. It is noteworthy that these books have been revised and re-issued in light of subsequent thinking on national identities.

[9] For example, *Patriotism: the making and unmaking of British national identity*, 3 volumes, ed. Raphael Samuel, (London: Routledge, 1989).

[10] *Becoming National: a reader*, eds. Geoff Eley and Ronald Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22.

lives of its citizenry."[11] Yet Billig still leaves the nation as something external to the individual, and such approaches see the nation "flagged" but do not necessarily explore how individuals participate in the nation. It is worth emphasizing that social identities involve *individuals* "identifying with" each other to produce communities.[12] Biography encourages the consideration of national identity as an act of negotiation between the individual and the collective. It emphasizes the particular in its relation to wider social identities. In their account of psychology and nationhood, Stephen Reicher and Nick Hopkins rightly argue that "generality is to be found by respecting, not by denying specificity."[13] They examine the way in which individuals use self-categorization to locate themselves in wider groupings but warn against reading these categories off from contexts. Instead, they urge recognition of the complexity of self-categorization.[14] This approach provides substantial underpinning for the biographical method in exploring identity formation. It enables consideration of the response by individuals to the multifarious representations that they encounter in daily life rather than isolating those representations from the response to them. Fully contextualized biographies allow for more detail than do, in general, accounts of nations and national identity. The apparently old-fashioned "life and times" appears to offer significant advantages in the discussion of national identities.

Second, concentration on a single life enables detailed examination of attitudes towards nation. Rather than looking at a particular nationalism expressed by a variety of nationalists, it is possible to consider the interplay of a variety of identities at once. The biographical approach does not isolate other forms of self-categorization from national identity. It allows examination of the notion that being national is located in the whole range of ways in which people think about themselves in relation to the society and communities in which they live. The narrative of Edwards' life allows consideration of the complex matrix of identities, not just of nation(s), but of social class, region, gender, religion and family too, across time and in response to different circumstances, including war, peace, industrial disputes and national events. It is now generally considered that national identities are fluid and unstable, and the biographical approach allows fluidity in identity to be more precisely mapped. It allows the issue of salience, of the rising and falling significance of different identities over time, to be addressed. There is of course the recognized potential, as Alun Munslow has indicated, that, "the author-historian-biographer creates explanations for their subject's lives rather than discovers them – *a* meaning is given to the events of a subject's life

[11] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 6.
[12] See W.J.M MacKenzie, *Political Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978) for a critique of the misuse of "identity" as a conceptual term.
[13] Stephen Reicher and Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation* (London: Sage, 2001), x-xi.
[14] Ibid. Chapter 2.

rather than *the* meaning."[15] Munslow, as a leading theorist of postmodern approaches to history, considers the biographer's more ready acceptance of the impossibility of objectivity a positive benefit of biography, though many other historians would see this as a major pitfall. Yet both critiques might be answered by indicating that biographies are more readily tested than many other varieties of history; they need to hold a close relationship to the extant historical evidence (I write here about rigorous rather than speculative biographies).

Thirdly, it is through biography that judgements on representativeness or uniqueness can be made. In the case of Edwards, I would suggest that an account of his political life would parallel few of his contemporaries. He was a prominent figure in Wales by the 1950s, known as "the unofficial prime minister of Wales." He had become a fixer, someone to whom even prominent politicians looked for support in furtherance of their projects. From the 1940s through to the 1960s, he was on any number of committees, commissions and boards both within Wales and without, as a representative of Wales on British bodies such as the BBC. His thoughts were sought by the press on any major issue within Wales. In that sense, he was unlike most Welsh men and women – but he certainly acted as representative of substantial sections of opinion throughout Wales, which is why he was asked to contribute so extensively to politics and civil society. Even his political opponents recognized him as "a leader of outstanding ability," whose Labour Party membership did not imply political partisanship.[16] He was seen as a national figure. In terms of national identities, he provided a middle line between Welshness and Britishness with which much of Wales felt comfortable. Edwards was a county councillor and union official, representing Labour, but he never sought to become an MP. He remained closer to his locality and region than to British politics. By remaining in Wales he represented Wales more closely, providing the Welsh people with a mirror of themselves. He was both unique and representative by virtue of his position as Welsh mediator of British politics.

My current project is a biography that places Edwards' life within a number of readings – in this paper, the focus is on class and national identity – in order to show the complex nature of personal and collective identities, which are constantly in negotiation, even when it might be considered that they can be "taken for granted". As I have argued elsewhere, a focus on biography allows for an

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[15] Alun Munslow, "History and biography: An editorial comment," *Rethinking History* 7, no. 1 (2003): 8.

[16] Thomas Waterhouse to Huw T. Edwards, 26 March 1949, Huw T. Edwards Papers A1/31, National Library of Wales (NLW). Waterhouse was writing to declare his regret that Edwards was being opposed in the county council elections, which he wrote was "contrary to the expressed wishes of the leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties on the [Flintshire] county council."

exploration of the way in which identities within the UK were stable in the mid-twentieth century but were by no means static.[17]

Edwards' various identities can be seen as forming at different junctures of his life.[18] Born in the Conwy Valley in Gwynedd in 1892, Edwards developed both Welsh and working-class identities simultaneously. His was a Welsh-speaking family, linked to the chapel through his father, a granite quarryman and deacon, and to the Welsh countryside through his mother and the family farm. Harsh industrial relations epitomized by the three-year lockout of the slate quarrymen by Lord Penrhyn between 1900 and 1903 encouraged a wide sense of Welshness and class antagonism in North Wales, with the owners and managers of the quarries being seen as English.[19] Edwards long remembered "the heartlessness of the quarry owners," particularly in relation to their failure to enquire after the health of his father following an accident at the quarry that left him seriously injured. Familial experience enhanced collective class identity. Edwards worked briefly in the granite quarry with his father but, when his brother was hurt in an explosion, it was decided that he should work in farming instead. Edwards felt this as a terrible blow to his pride and moved to South Wales, where his class awareness was developed further through his experience of working in the collieries. Edwards arrived in the valleys in time to take part in the Cambrian Combine strike of 1910 as a member of the South Wales Miners' Federation. Hence, by his adolescent years, his life experiences had provided him with the opportunity to consider the relationships between Welshness and class in a variety of settings.

Yet Edwards had already realized that his Welshness was encompassed by a British identity, in part because of his broad view of the working class. Without doubt, he felt fundamentally different from the English people he encountered on his journey south, describing his sense of difference fully in his autobiography; and yet he considered the 1910 strike as having "a place of its own in the history of the workers of Britain," and that the Senghennydd pit disaster of 1913 which killed 439

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[17] Paul Ward, *Unionism in the United Kingdom, 1918-1974* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.
[18] There is currently no book length biography of Edwards, but see Keith Gildart, "Edwards, Huw Thomas (1892-1970)," in *Dictionary of Labour Biography Volume XI,* eds. Keith Gildart, David Howell and Neville Kirk (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 57-65; and Gwyn Jenkins, "Edwards, Huw Thomas (1892–1970)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, October 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58293, accessed 2 February 2007].
[19] There were frequent criticisms of the English ownership and management of the industries, so in the 1840s a verse told how: "In workplaces here in Wales / See Englishmen interfering; / But you must get Welshmen to break the stone, / For the rock does not understand English." Quoted in Merfyn Jones, "Y chwarelwyr: The slate quarrymen of North Wales," in *Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 124. See also R. Merfyn Jones, *The North Wales Quarrymen 1874-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982).

people was "the greatest tragedy in the mining history of Britain."[20] Half the population of Wales were under twenty-four in 1911, and there was substantial in-migration to the metal and mining areas of South Wales.[21] With just under half of these migrants coming from outside Wales, Edwards was introduced to English as the major social language allowing communication of the social and class solidarity bred from the dangerous nature of coal mining in early twentieth century Britain. As Chris Williams has explained, "with the miners often working in half a dozen or more concerns in the course of their working lives, it was the arduous nature of colliery employment and its attendant unrelenting threat of injury and death that made for a relative cultural homogenization and a common occupation identity."[22] Pit disasters that killed miners indiscriminately, and a feeling that conditions were similar across the United Kingdom, meant a strong occupational identity, which in turn encouraged a wider sense of British identity. The links of the South Wales Miners' Federation (the Fed) to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain show the institutional framework of such occupational and "British" allegiances.

The obligations of such Britishness became apparent in 1914, when Edwards, who had joined the special army reserve in order to box,[23] was called up to serve in France on the day war broke out. Here too, he shared a sense of exhilaration with many other young British men. Hence, he wrote that he "began to worry in the case the fighting would be over before we got to France" and that he "was anxious to get to grips with the enemy."[24] Edwards' service as a driver in the Royal Field Artillery brought him into closer contact than he had known before with Britons from other parts of the Isles (as opposed to those who had migrated to Wales). As John Davies has argued, "By suffering alongside Geordies and Brummies, Cockneys and Scousers, Micks, Jocks and Aussies, the Taffs became part of a new brotherhood; to become a soldier was to assume a new nationality."[25] Edwards remarked in his autobiography on the "friendship that grew up between Jock and me," and how he spent "many a happy week far from the front with my old friends Joby Calverouse and Jim Lewis Merthyr, Bernard Hook from Bannockburn and scores of others addicted to the noble art [of boxing]."[26] Britons were maintaining their local distinctiveness (often, as here, through nicknames) yet

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[20] Huw T. Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock* (Cardiff: Western Mail and TWW, 1967), 42-3, 45. Edwards' autobiography had been previously published in two volumes in Welsh, as *Tros y Tresi* (Denbigh: Gwasg Gee, 1956) and *Troi'r Drol* (Denbigh: Gwasg y March Gwyn, 1963).

[21] R. Merfyn Jones, "Social Change in Wales," in eds. David Dunkerley and Andrew Thompson, *Wales Today* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), 11.

[22] Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda: Politics and Society* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 14-15.

[23] As a young man in the valleys, Edwards, like many others, took up boxing. The army reserve provided an organizational structure for boxing competition.

[24] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*, 46.

[25] John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London: Penguin, 1994), 514.

[26] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*, 49, 50.

recognizing their shared identities. On Edwards' return to North Wales, his class identity once more brought out the connections between Welshness and Britishness. He returned to working in the quarries, joining the Settmakers' Union.[27] The membership of this union was concentrated in North Wales and around Aberdeen in Scotland, so it effectively acted on a local basis. Yet in the early 1920s it (along with the North Wales Quarrymen's Union) was absorbed into the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), a union with a mass membership in semi- and unskilled trades across the whole of the UK. To be working class in the 1920s involved membership of a British labor movement.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Edwards' political and union activism linked North Wales and Britain, at the same time revealing tensions within Labour as a multi-national coalition party. Edwards raised money in his area to support the *Daily Herald*, in return expecting a page to be devoted to Wales with a column in Welsh. Though he was to be disappointed in this wish, the Labour Party advanced in Wales, gaining 43.9 per cent of the vote in 1929. Edwards also shared the experience of British unemployment in the staple and extractive industries. His appointment as a union official for region 13 of the TGWU ended his period of unemployment and placed him on a path to the leadership of Welsh civil society, by virtue of his representation of his class. Region 13 included the Dee Estuary—the border land between Wales and Cheshire, as well as parts of Staffordshire. Edwards was now a public official in a multi-national and cultural organization.[28] Across the 1930s, "British" developments began to take precedence over Welsh concerns, as mass unemployment encouraged the idea of central planning, and the rise of fascism and the outbreak of war necessitated national action across the UK labor movement.[29]

The election of a majority Labour government in 1945 emerged out of these two developments: the national responses to regional economic problems and the notion of victory in the war as the logical outcome of "the people's war." The election of Labour led to the formation of the welfare state, firmly within a British national idiom. National insurance (introduced by James Griffiths), the National Health Service (introduced by Aneurin Bevan) and nationalisation all encouraged direct engagement with the British state at the same time as allowing Welsh Labour to celebrate its contribution to democratic socialism. In 1950 Edwards

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[27] Edwards was involved in a trade union demarcation dispute in 1920 in which he and a number of others joined the dockers' union. He was dismissed from the quarry for refusing to rejoin the Settmakers when instructed to do so by the Trades Union Congress. See letter from C.H.Derbyshire to Hugh Edwards (Huw T.'s father), 13 December 1920, Huw T. Edwards papers, A3/39, National Library of Wales.

[28] Huw T. Edwards, *It Was My Privilege* (Denbigh: Gee, 1957) recounts Edwards' experience as a union official.

[29] Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda*, 3.

asked a meeting in his native Penmaenmawr, "Is the British way of life worth preserving?" and answered positively because, he said, "We have seen built in our time, or at least we have seen the foundations laid, of the Welfare State."[30]

At the same time as these developments in Britishness, Edwards had also been pressing for the recognition of Welsh distinctiveness. He rejected Bevan's view that it was impossible to tell the difference between a Welsh and an English sheep, and he also, while being an official of the TGWU, encouraged this British union to fund the National Eisteddfod and Coleg Harlech. Edwards also constantly suggested reforms to encourage the government to take Welsh issues seriously. In 1945, he called for "a re-dedication of this Movement to problems that are essentially Welsh."[31] In September 1946, he wrote a memorandum to the secretary of the Labour Party, Morgan Phillips, calling for a Welsh-speaking commissioner for Wales and a Welsh advisory committee. As a centralizer, Phillips ignored Edwards' demands, so Edwards wrote an open letter to Clement Attlee, the prime minister. His demand now was for Welsh parliamentary secretaries for education, agriculture and health. This was not nationalist rebellion but a suggestion to enable "sympathetic recognition" of the "special problems" of Wales.[32] The outcome of Edwards' (and other parts of Welsh Labour's) demands was the formation of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire in 1949, with Edwards appointed as chairman. Such a reorganization fell firmly within Labour's view of central planning with regional measures.

While the Council was fairly toothless, able only to offer advice rather than to make recommendations, it did represent recognition of Welsh nationhood by the British state. At the first meeting of the Council on 20 May 1949, Edwards said, "We welcome the setting-up of the Council – because it is one further recognition that Wales is a Nation." He made clear that the ambitions of Wales could be met within Britain, for he continued, "We are very proud to be a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. We feel that Wales has a distinctive contribution to make and we further feel that this Council is an instrument through which we can make that contribution."[33] Despite the frustrations of the Parliament for Wales Campaign,[34] Welsh governance was developed with the incoming Conservative government appointing a minister with responsibility for Wales (first the Home

[30] "Notes of Speeches 1945-51," Huw T. Edwards Papers, C3, National Library of Wales.
[31] Quoted in R. Merfyn Jones and Ioan Rhys Jones, "Labour and the Nation", in *The Labour Party in Wales, 1900-2000,* eds. Duncan Tanner, Chris Williams and Deian Hopkin, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 248-9.
[32] "The Problems of Wales," A4/1; "An Open Letter to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet," A4/3, Huw T. Edwards Papers, NLW.
[33] "Notes of Speeches 1945-51," Huw T. Edwards Papers C3, NLW.
[34] For which see J. Graham Jones, "The Parliament for Wales campaign, 1950-1956," *Welsh History Review* 16 (1992-3): 207-36.

Secretary and subsequently the Minister of Housing).[35] The pace of change encouraged the Council for Wales to argue, in its *Third Memorandum*, for the appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales. With the government's outright rejection of the memorandum, Edwards moved to the center of Welsh politics. He resigned from the Council, revitalizing the debate on Welsh political representation. Even more startlingly, the following year, before the general election, Edwards also resigned from the Labour Party because of what he called "its positive neglect to make any declaration on a nation's rights."[36] Edwards joined Plaid Cymru. This act has been seen as forming an episode in the dissolution of British identities, a forerunner to the late twentieth century "break-up of Britain."[37] Edwards' biography is represented as mirroring the biography of the British nation.

Yet Edwards' actions reveal the complexity of identities, not their simplicity. His resignation from the Council and from Labour represented his frustration over class, political and national identities. Edwards had become increasingly involved in aspects of Welsh culture, including taking over *Y Faner*. He was also prominent in the campaign against Liverpool council's plans to flood the Tryweryn Valley to secure its water supply. Therefore, Edwards' politics were seemingly becoming more Welsh; yet, his Wales remained the Wales of the working class. In these years, while he had retired from his union position, he was writing a history of the TGWU in north Wales. The Welsh, he said, were "a militant people steeped in strikes and lock-outs," thereby locating Welshness in the class struggle.[38] He further explained his resignation from Labour as resulting not solely from its neglect of Wales but also from "Gaitskell's unofficial Toryism."[39] Edwards' resignation was, therefore, a reaffirmation of his socialism as well as an assertion of nationalism. As he wrote in his autobiography, he had said "goodbye to the party but not to socialism."[40] British Labour, in the late 1950s, was failing his class as well as his nation.

When writing a biography, it is necessary to ensure that one does not overstate the importance of one's subject. On his death, the *Western Mail* described Edwards as one of the seven wonders of Wales.[41] This declaration might add to the sense of the significance of Edwards' move away from Labour to Plaid Cymru,

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[35] For the Conservatives and Wales in the 1950s, and particularly for the role of Gwilym Lloyd George, see Ward, *Unionism*, 88-90.
[36] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*, 165.
[37] Weight, *Patriots*, 277-8.
[38] Edwards, *It Was My Privilege*, 5.
[39] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*, 165.
[40] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*. This is the title of chapter 2 of Book II.
[41] The other six were Trawsfynydd power station, Llangollen International Eisteddfod, Snowdonia, the National Coal Board, Cardiff city centre and the Welsh character. *Western Mail*, no date, in Edwards Papers, F16, Press Cuttings on 1970 death of Huw T Edwards, NLW.

emphasizing the increasing importance of the national question in politics and its detrimental impact on Labour. Notwithstanding Plaid's challenge in north-west Wales,[42] in these years Labour was reaching the peak of its support in Wales. With the pledge to establish a Welsh Office and Secretary of State in its manifesto, Labour secured 57.8 per cent of the vote in 1964, while Plaid Cymru got only 4.8 per cent. In 1966 Labour was to secure its highest ever share of the vote in Wales: 60.8 per cent. Labour was well able to accommodate Welshness. As John Osmond argued in 1977, "the Labour Party in Wales was able by the early 1960s to present itself as the national party of Wales, sympathetic not only to the steel workers of Ebbw Vale and the miners of Caerphilly, but also to the hill farmers of Meirionnydd and the dairymen of Anglesey."[43] As if to emphasize this point, Edwards' membership of Plaid Cymru was short-lived. He made financial contributions to the Labour Party in the run up to the 1964 election and rejoined the party in January 1965. Again, Edwards linked nation and class politics to his decision: "It seemed to me that under the leadership of Harold Wilson the movement to which I had devoted my life was beginning to recapture its early socialist vision and indeed [was] moving towards a progressive and realist policy on Welsh affairs."[44] The Wilson government had also appointed a Secretary of State for Wales, establishing a Welsh Office. Class, socialism and Welshness went hand in hand as late as the mid-1960s.

At the end of his political life, therefore, Edwards once again reiterated the combination of complex identities possible in relation to Welshness. His return to British Labour questions the linear assumption of the break-up of Britain. Edwards' Britishness did not unravel. His commitment to the social betterment of the working class combined with his desire for greater political autonomy for Wales to rekindle his support for the British Labour Party, which he saw as an integrated body able to accommodate class and Welsh national feeling within a commitment to all-British solutions.

A single biography leads us back to the question about whether Edwards can be seen as representative of Labour in Wales. We might, therefore, usefully refer to a couple of other individuals. Andrew Edwards says that "his study of [Goronwy] Roberts' political beliefs demonstrates that 'nationalistic' Labour Party members were concerned not only for the cultural and moral rights of self-government and the future of Wales, but also for the 'bread and butter' pragmatic issues, including employment, housing and welfare, which are normally associated

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[42] See Andrew Edwards, *Labour's Crisis: Plaid Cymru, the Conservatives and the challenge to Labour dominance in north Wales 1960-1979* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, forthcoming).
[43] John Osmond, *Creative Conflict: The politics of Welsh devolution* (Llandysul and London: Gomer Press, 1977), 123.
[44] Edwards, *Hewn from the Rock*, 65.

with the Labour Party."[45] Kenneth Morgan writes of Cledwyn Hughes that "he believed that the Welsh were natural-born socialists; the very word 'Cymru' implied co-operation and comradeship."[46] In both cases, the Labour Party provided a home for Welsh and class aspirations, even if they sometimes found the party uncomfortable. Indeed, a list of prominent Labour figures in Wales reads like a list of prominent Welsh nationalists of various shades. Edwards' Welshness was intimately and inextricably linked with his sense of class, which in turn he saw as relating him to the wider British labor movement. Craig Calhoun is right to argue that "the modern discourse of national identity is closely linked to the idea of the individual." However, the experience of Edwards and other Welsh Labour figures tells against his further conclusion that "National identity assumes a special priority over other collective identities in the construction of personal identity."[47] A biographical approach, taking full account of historical context, suggests that collective and personal identities are linked by their complexity and their ability to contain multiple facets simultaneously, that Welshness was constructed alongside social, political and multiple national identities. Huw T. was Welsh and working class, a cultural nationalist and a socialist (but British too).

[45] Andrew Edwards, "Answering the Challenge of Nationalism: Goronwy Roberts and the Appeal of the Labour Party in North-West Wales during the 1950s," *Welsh History Review* 22, no. 1 (2004): 126-52.
[46] Kenneth O. Morgan, "Hughes, Cledwyn, Baron Cledwyn of Penrhos (1916–2001)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, January 2005 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75422, accessed 4 July 2006].
[47] Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), 125.